

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 998

AN ACT

To direct the Librarian of Congress and the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution to carry out a joint project at the Library of Congress and the National Museum of African American History and Culture to collect video and audio recordings of personal histories and testimonials of individuals who participated in the Civil Rights movement, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Civil Rights History
5 Project Act of 2008”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds as follows:

8 (1) A fundamental principle of American de-
9 mocracy is that individuals should stand up for their
10 rights and beliefs and fight for justice.

11 (2) The actions of those who participated in the
12 Civil Rights movement from the 1950’s through the
13 1960’s are a shining example of this principle in ac-
14 tion, demonstrated in events as varied as the Mont-
15 gomery Bus Boycott, the sit-ins, the Freedom Rides,
16 the March on Washington, the drive for voting
17 rights in Mississippi, and the March to Selma.

18 (3) While the Civil Rights movement had many
19 visible leaders, including Thurgood Marshall, Dr.
20 Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rosa Parks, there
21 were many others whose impact and experience were
22 just as important to the cause but who are not as
23 well known.

24 (4) The participants in the Civil Rights move-
25 ment possess an invaluable resource in their first-

1 hand memories of the movement, and the recording
2 of the retelling of their stories and memories will
3 provide a rich, detailed history of our Nation during
4 an important and tumultuous period.

5 (5) It is in the Nation's interest to undertake
6 a project to collect oral histories of individuals from
7 the Civil Rights movement so future generations will
8 be able to learn of their struggle and sacrifice
9 through primary-source, eyewitness material. A co-
10 ordinated Federal project would also focus attention
11 on the efforts undertaken by various public and pri-
12 vate entities to collect and interpret articles in all
13 formats relating to the Civil Rights movement, and
14 serve as a model for future projects undertaken in
15 museums, libraries, and universities throughout the
16 Nation.

17 (6) The Library of Congress and the Smithso-
18 nian Institution are appropriate repositories to col-
19 lect, preserve, and make available to the public a col-
20 lection of these oral histories. The Library and
21 Smithsonian have expertise in the management of
22 documentation projects, and experience in the devel-
23 opment of cultural and educational programs for the
24 public.

1 (b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act to create
 2 a new federally sponsored, authorized, and funded project
 3 that will coordinate at a national level the collection of
 4 video and audio recordings of personal histories and
 5 testimonials of individuals who participated in the Amer-
 6 ican Civil Rights movement that will build upon and com-
 7 plement previous and ongoing documentary work on this
 8 subject, and to assist and encourage local efforts to pre-
 9 serve the memories of such individuals so that Americans
 10 of all current and future generations may hear from them
 11 directly and better appreciate the sacrifices they made.

12 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT PROJECT AT LIBRARY**
 13 **OF CONGRESS AND NATIONAL MUSEUM OF**
 14 **AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE**
 15 **TO COLLECT VIDEO AND AUDIO RECORDINGS**
 16 **OF HISTORIES OF PARTICIPANTS IN AMER-**
 17 **ICAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.**

18 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROJECT.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—Within the limits of avail-
 20 able funds, the Librarian of Congress (hereafter re-
 21 ferred to as the “Librarian”) and the Secretary of
 22 the Smithsonian Institution (hereafter referred to as
 23 the “Secretary”), acting jointly, shall establish an
 24 oral history project—

1 (A) to survey, during the initial phase of
2 the project, collections of audio and video re-
3 cordings of the reminiscences of participants in
4 the Civil Rights movement that are housed in
5 archives, libraries, museums, and other edu-
6 cational institutions, as well as ongoing docu-
7 mentary work, in order to augment and com-
8 plement these endeavors and avoid duplication
9 of effort;

10 (B) to solicit, reproduce, and collect—

11 (i) video and audio recordings of per-
12 sonal histories and testimonials of individ-
13 uals who participated in the Civil Rights
14 movement, and

15 (ii) visual and written materials (such
16 as letters, diaries, photographs, and
17 ephemera) relevant to the personal his-
18 tories of individuals;

19 (C) to create a collection of the recordings
20 and other materials obtained, and to catalog
21 and index the collection in a manner the Li-
22 brarian and the Secretary consider appropriate;
23 and

24 (D) to make the collection available for
25 public use through the Library of Congress and

1 the National Museum of African American His-
2 tory and Culture, as well as through such other
3 methods as the Librarian and the Secretary
4 consider appropriate.

5 (2) ROLE OF DIRECTOR OF MUSEUM.—The
6 Secretary shall carry out the Secretary's duties
7 under this Act through the Director of the National
8 Museum of African American History and Culture.

9 (b) USE OF AND CONSULTATION WITH OTHER ENTI-
10 TIES.—The Librarian and the Secretary may carry out the
11 activities described in subsection (a)(1) through agree-
12 ments and partnerships entered into with other govern-
13 ment and private entities, and may otherwise consult with
14 interested persons (within the limits of available re-
15 sources) and develop appropriate guidelines and arrange-
16 ments for soliciting, acquiring, and making available re-
17 cordings under the project under this Act.

18 (c) SERVICES OF EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS; AC-
19 CEPTANCE OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES; ADVANCE PAY-
20 MENTS.—In carrying out activities described in subsection
21 (a)(1), the Librarian and the Secretary may—

22 (1) procure temporary and intermittent services
23 under section 3109 of title 5, United States Code;

24 (2) accept and utilize the services of volunteers
25 and other uncompensated personnel and reimburse

1 them for travel expenses, including per diem, as au-
2 thorized under section 5703 of title 5, United States
3 Code; and

4 (3) make advances of money and payments in
5 advance in accordance with section 3324 of title 31,
6 United States Code.

7 (d) TIMING.—As soon as practicable after the enact-
8 ment of this Act, the Librarian and the Secretary shall
9 begin collecting video and audio recordings and other ma-
10 terials under subsection (a)(1), and shall attempt to collect
11 the first such recordings from the oldest individuals in-
12 volved.

13 (e) DEFINITION.—In this Act, the term “Civil Rights
14 movement” means the movement to secure racial equality
15 in the United States for African Americans that, focusing
16 on the period 1954 through 1968, challenged the practice
17 of racial segregation in the Nation and achieved equal
18 rights legislation for all American citizens.

19 **SEC. 4. PRIVATE SUPPORT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY**
20 **PROJECT.**

21 (a) ENCOURAGING SOLICITATION AND ACCEPTANCE
22 OF DONATIONS.—The Librarian of Congress and the Sec-
23 retary are encouraged to solicit and accept donations of
24 funds and in-kind contributions to support activities under
25 section 3.

1 (b) DEDICATION OF FUNDS PROVIDED TO LIBRARY
2 OF CONGRESS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of
3 law—

4 (1) any funds donated to the Librarian of Con-
5 gress to support the activities of the Librarian under
6 section 3 shall be deposited entirely into an account
7 established for such purpose;

8 (2) the funds contained in such account shall be
9 used solely to support such activities; and

10 (3) the Librarian of Congress may not deposit
11 into such account any funds donated to the Librar-
12 ian which are not donated for the exclusive purpose
13 of supporting such activities.

14 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

15 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
16 this Act—

17 (1) \$500,000 for fiscal year 2009; and

18 (2) such sums as may be necessary for each of
19 the fiscal years 2010 through 2013.

Passed the House of Representatives September 17,
2008.

Attest:

Clerk.

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